

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA JA
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E.O. N/A
TAGS: MARR, JA
SUBJECT: JAPANESE REACTIONS TO TEAM SPIRIT 78

1. TEAM SPIRIT HAS RECEIVED EXTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE WITH BOTH TV AND NEWSPAPERS CARRYING STORIES AND COMMENTARY BY CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF JAPANESE CORRESPONDENTS IN ROK AND ACCOMPANYING VARIOUS UNITS DEPLOYED. TREATMENT HAS, BY AND LARGE, BEEN FACTUAL AND OBJECTIVE. EMPHASIZING FACT THAT EXERCISE IS LARGEST IN NE ASIA SINCE END OF VIETNAM WAR. SOME ATTENTION HAS FOCUSED ON DEPLOYMENT - AND TRANSIT THROUGH JAPAN - OF NUCLEAR-CAPABLE LANCE MISSILE UNIT AND CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS HAS BEEN PLACED ON INTENSIVE OPERATIONS IN OKINAWA, WHICH UNDERLINES ITS IMPORTANCE IN US STRATEGY. OKINAWA ASPECT HAS, OF COURSE, BEEN VERY HEAVILY PLAYED IN LOCAL OKINAWA PAPERS AND TV.

2. EDITORIAL REACTION AND COMMENTARY HAVE BEEN MIXED. WHILE ASAHI TREATED PASSAGE IN SECDEF'S LOS ANGELES SPEECH ON US DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN US MILITARY
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PRESENCE IN ASIA AS REASSURING TO ASIAN COUNTRIES, IT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT EXERCISE RAISED PRIOR-CONSULTATION QUESTION AND SPECTRE OF JAPAN BECOMING INVOLVED IN WAR AGAINST ITS WILL. WITHOUT REACHING CONCRETE CONCLUSIONS, ASAHI NOTED THAT US SHOULD REALIZE THAT MAINTENANCE OF MILITARY BALANCE ALONE WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO MAINTAIN PEACE IN ASIA AND THAT JAPAN SHOULD CONSIDER

CAREFULLY WHAT USE OF US BASES HERE MEANS FOR JAPAN. IN CONTRAST, CONSERVATIVE SANKEI TOOK POSITION THAT, AS US STRATEGY WAS ESSENTIALLY DEFENSIVE, US - JAPAN COOPERATION SHOULD BE WORKED OUT IN ADVANCE TO CONTRIBUTE TO EFFECTIVENESS OF US BASES AS DETERRENT AND TO ASSURE THAT OPERATIONS WOULD NOT BE IMPEDED IN EMERGENCY.

3. WHILE ATTEMPTING TO AVOID HIGHLIGHTING TEAM SPIRIT, PARTICULARLY USE OF FACILITIES IN JAPAN, GOJ ATTITUDE HAS BEEN POSITIVE. JDA DIRGEN KANEMARU TOLD DIET MARCH 6 THAT PURPOSE OF EXERCISE WAS TO IMPROVE MILITARY TECHNIQUES. DSP DIET MEMBER TOLD US THAT HE SUPPORTED EXERCISE AND FONOFF CONTACTS HAVE ALL ASSURED US THAT, WHILE THEY HOPED JAPAN-RELATED ASPECTS WOULD BE TREATED IN LOW-KEY GOJ VERY MUCH SUPPORTED AND APPRECIATED CONCRETE DISPLAY OF US DETERMINATION EMBODIED IN TEAM SPIRIT EXERCISE.

4. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN SOME CONCERN IN MEDIA THAT TEAM SPIRIT WAS ONE MORE DEMONSTRATION OF HOW JAPAN COULD WILLY-NILLY BECOME INVOLVED IN HOSTILITIES ON KOREAN PENINSULA, GENERAL REACTION HAS BEEN RELATIVELY RESTRAINED. SHERMAN

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